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## [I Am Navy Medicine: Lt. Cmdr. Jerri Gray](#)

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*By Navy Medicine West Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examination Program Manager, Lieutenant Commander Jerri Gray*



Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Lieutenant Commander Jerri Gray interviews a patient. (Official U.S. Navy photo)

My name is Lt. Cmdr. Jerri Gray and this is my story. I was born into a military family; my father retired from the Army, so I knew from a young age I would have a career that intersected with the military. This came to fruition in 2002, after earning my master's degree in nursing I joined the Navy nurse corps. My first duty station was the Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCSD) on a multi-service pediatric ward.

However, it wasn't until my first tour as a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner at Naval Hospital Pensacola (NHP) that I became aware of the specialty of forensic nursing. After four months at NHP I became severely ill with pneumonia, which required a prolonged ICU stay and rehabilitation. Shortly after my recovery, I was talking with one of my ICU nurses, a reservist who had just been hired as the Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examiner (SAMFE) Program Manager. She was looking for volunteers to stand on her watch bill. I jumped at the opportunity to learn something new and I took my first 40 hour didactic course.

It was not until I transferred to Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune (NHCL) that my interest in forensic nursing peaked. Under the mentorship of Mrs. Brown, I continued my education at the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center, and obtained my doctoral of nurse practice in forensic nursing. In 2013 I returned to NMCS, where patients were being transferred to a civilian facility for evidence collection. Jump ahead one year to the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2014, mandating Military Treatment Facilities with a 24/7 Emergency Room to have at least one Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) assigned. I was given the opportunity to create from the ground a comprehensive SAMFE program which has further expanded under its current PM, LCDR Ryals. This endeavor left me well prepared to move onto my current job opportunity, Navy Medicine West (NMW) SAMFE Program Manager. Currently I oversee ten SAMFE programs throughout NMW. I ensure that we are providing optimal, evidence based care to our patients as well as provide subject matter expertise. I also provide medical-legal consulting for both the defense and prosecution of sexual assault cases. I am a member of the Mobile Training Team (MTT), which is utilized by the tri-services to fill gaps in training.

Why do I enjoy forensic nursing? Not only do we have an important impact on the patient but that impact extends further into the community, the Armed Forces, and often results in prosecution of perpetrators. Forensic nursing is based on the Lockard Exchange Principal. Simply put, when objects come in contact, they leave a trace or transfer between them. The forensic nurse is providing medical care while obtaining that trace evidence. This evidence cannot be manipulated nor is it dependent on witness statements; it is fact that can exonerate or convict an individual. Evidence does not lie.

Thank you and to all of those who have served as a SAMFE examiner present or past (to many to list)...

I am LCDR Gray and I am Navy Medicine.

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